Sciences, A Bilingual Edition and an Interpretation of René Descartes' Philosophy of Method (Notre Dame/London, 1994). This edition argues the case that it is impossible to understand Descartes' method by trying to read the text of the *Discourse on the Method* out of context.

On the Cartesian method and logic one should see:

1 Stephen Gaukroger, *Cartesian Logic: An Essay on Descartes's Conception of Inference* (Oxford/New York, 1989). This concise and precise study, a treatment of Descartes' interpretation of inference as an instantaneous apprehension in accordance with the natural light of reason – in contrast to the Aristotelian view of it as a discursive process –, argues that Descartes' account played a key role in the development of an understanding of the nature of inference.[249] Gaukroger refers repeatedly to the *Regulæ*.

Some reference keys to the Cartesian method are the following:

1 Étienne Gilson, *Index scolastico-cartésien* (Paris, 1913/1979). This remains the definitive record of Descartes' indebtedness to Scholastic sources, which was somehow long overlooked by many.
2 Jean-Robert Armogathe and Jean-Luc Marion, *Index des 'Regulæ ad directionem ingenii' de René Descartes, Avec des listes de leçons et conjectures établies par G. Crapulli* (Rome, 1976). One major difference between this index and that of the present edition is that the latter provides the information about declensions and about conjugations that most readers need to become actively collaborating co-translators.
3 John Cottingham, *A Descartes Dictionary* (Oxford/Cambridge, MA, 1993). This is a work of admirable erudition, whose real strength lies in the manner in which it defines the Cartesian termini technici by means of rigorous contextualization. This edition has plundered it shamelessly.

'On' Descartes' method, project, and concept of rationality one may consult:

1 Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (London/New York, 1975/1988/1993). Although Feyerabend mentions Descartes only twice (pp. 49 and 54) and the *Regulæ* not even once, a highly effective way of reading the latter is by juxtaposing the 21 rules found there and the 21 'counterrules' (including the introduction) of *Against Method*, thus by analyzing – point by counterpoint – first the ones and then the others. Hermeneutical justice demands that this also be a legitimate way of reading *Against Method*. In any case, one can argue that it is just as serious a misunderstanding to view the author of the *Regulæ* as a 'methodological absolutist' as it is to regard the author of *Against Method* as a 'naive anarchist'.[250] After all, the crucial dictum 'anything goes' is itself a text that must be understood in a context – the point being, not that 'no methods have any uses', but that 'all methodologies … have their limits'.[251]
2 Jean-François Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne: Rapport sur le savoir* (Paris, 1979). Here Descartes' *Regulæ* are characterized as an example of an – inevitably inadequate – attempt 'to fix the rules by means of which a denotative utterance can obtain the assent of the addressee'.[252] Lyotard's essay on 'legitimation', a more or less accurate diagnosis of the condition of a humanity that can no longer afford naively to believe in certain long-held ideals of modern rationalism or of 'rational' modernity, is difficult to characterize. For, on one level, it is possible to understand it as a plea for pluralism that leaves open the possibility that for certain well-defined purposes some language-games are better than others. On another level, it is more probable than not that it be interpreted as an unqualified

[249] It also offers more than adequate compensation for what William and Martha Kneale left out – their *The Development of Logic* (Oxford, 1962) does not appear to do justice to Descartes' contribution to the evolution of logic.
[250] Cf. Feyerabend's self-understanding, *Against Method*, p. 231.
[251] See ibid., pp. 14, 18–19, 23, 231, etc.
[252] See Lyotard, *La condition postmoderne*, p. 69: '… Descartes … [a] … essayé de fixer les règles par lesquelles un énoncé à valeur dénotative peut obtenir l'adhésion du destinataire.' The reference is to the *Regulæ* and to the *Principles of Philosophy* (see ibid., fn. 137).

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assault on the notion that one language-game, for example, that of modern mathematical science with its philosophical foundations, is better than another – with no special attention being paid to the respect in which this is supposed to be true or not. The difference between the two interpretations amounts to the distinction between an attack on absolutism and a defense of relativism. But there is a pragmatic mean between the dogmatic extreme, according to which science is supposed to be the only kind of knowledge, and the skeptical extreme, according to which science is supposed to be just another kind of ignorance.[253] *Everything is relative, but not absolutely*.[254] However fashionable it may be to do so, to look at Descartes' philosophy as a paradigmatic instance of modernity, that is, as a prime example of all that which, from a postmodern perspective, has lost its claim to legitimacy, is to understand nothing.[255] Indeed, it is an imperative of charitable interpretation that one take into consideration how those who are to be understood understand themselves.[256] Thus no understanding of Descartes or of his philosophy which fails to appreciate his understanding of himself and of his philosophy has any real chance of understanding him or his philosophy.[257] *And the single most impor-*

[253] Cf., e.g., Paul R. Gross and Norman Levitt, *Higher Superstition: The Academic Left and Its Quarrels with Science* (Baltimore, 1994). The argument of this book is polemical, but in the constructive, not in the destructive, sense.

[254] Contra Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Scepticism*, bk. I, ch. XIV, secs. 135–140.

[255] The more careless critique of 'modernity' from a 'postmodern' perspective has even led to such absurdities as the following assertion (unmitigated by context): 'The Unabomber turns out to be a Cartesian rationalist … .' See Alex Beam, 'Sympathy for the Devil', *The Boston Globe*, April 10, 1996, p. 66. After all, René Descartes and Theodore Kaczynski were both mathematicians. Of course, Joseph Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili and Karol Jozef Wojtyla were both seminarians. That, too, explains a lot.

[256] Thus one might formulate the positive version of the 'golden' rule of hermeneutics in the following way: 'Understand others as you would be understood by them.' The negative version might be formulated as follows: 'Do not misunderstand others as you would not be misunderstood by them.' Cf. Isocrates, *Nicocles*, sec. 61; Seneca, *Epistulae morales*, ch. 94, sec. 43; and Aelius Lampridius, *Vita of Severus Alexander*, ch. 51. Cf. also, of course, *Tobias*, v. 4, l. 16; *Matthew*, 7, 12; and *Luke*, 6, 31. This is not 'moralizing' precisely because understanding others is usually a question of one's own character as well.

[257] Perhaps the real distinction between the Classical hermeneutics reinvented by Gadamer, who holds it to be practicable that one try to understand others even better than they understood themselves (cf. *Wahrheit und Methode*, almost passim, but esp. p. 195 ff.), and the anti-philological, deconstructionist hermeneutics inspired by Nietzsche, who claims, ironically, that 'there is something insulting about being understood' (cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente: Herbst 1885 bis Herbst 1887*, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari, sec. 8, vol. 1 [Berlin/New York, 1974], p. 47: '… es ist etwas Beleidigendes darin, verstanden zu werden …'), lies, not so much in naive optimism versus cynical pessimism about the possibility of mutual understanding, as much rather in the presence versus absence of the good will on the part of the one person to understand, and to be understood by, the other. And perhaps it is this difference which has also manifested itself in the encounter between Gadamer and Derrida regarding the conditions of the (im)possibility of mutual understanding. Cf., e.g., P. Forget (ed.), *Text und Interpretation: Deutsch-französische Debatte mit Beiträgen von J. Derrida, Ph. Forget, M. Frank, H.-G. Gadamer, J. Greisch und F. Laruelle* (Munich, 1984), and D. P. Michelfelder and R. E. Palmer (eds.), *Dialogue & Deconstruction: The Gadamer-Derrida Encounter* (Albany, 1989). It is one thing to entertain a certain healthy skepticism vis-à-vis the prospects of understanding, and of being understood by, the other; it is another thing to question whether it is worthwhile even to attempt to understand, and to be understood by, the other. In ethics, *ought* implies *can*: One cannot be obligated to do what one cannot do. In hermeneutics, which possesses an ineluctable technical dimension, *cannot* threatens to entail *ought not*: If one cannot understand, and cannot be understood by, the other, then why try? In any case, since it is by understanding, and by being understood by, the other that one understands oneself and thus anything at all, who and what would be left to understand, and to be understood by, if one could not understand, and could not be understood by, anyone or anything other than oneself? But understanding, and being understood, is a matter, not of all or nothing, but of grades, degrees, and levels. Yet that is 'ein *zu* weites Feld'.

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tant thing to consider about Descartes' self-apprehension is that he understands his philosophy as striving toward a mean of rational pragmatism between the excesses of Scholastic absolutism, on the one hand, and the defects of Pyrrhonian relativism, on the other hand. For, acutely aware of the distinction between intent and effect, Descartes realizes that the former extreme would substitute inquisition for investigation, while the latter extreme would replace science with superstition. Of course, to everything there is a time. Times change. Paradigms shift. What was once a mean can now become an extreme and vice versa. But the same also holds for present positions.

3 Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago, 1990). Emphasizing the essential limitations of many views in Descartes' *Discourse on the Method*, one of 'the founding documents of modern thought',[258] this most perceptive study of the meaning of modernity questions the validity of the vision of 'Cosmopolis', that is, a society as rationally ordered as Newtonian nature, with its 'hidden agenda', namely, that 'the human things' could be fitted into exact rational categories. To be sure, one can ask what other course modern philosophy and science would have taken if they had been oriented on Montaigne's *Essays* rather than on Descartes' *Discourse*. None the less, one may also wonder whether this course would not have been substantially different if it had been charted rather by Descartes' *Regulæ* than by his *Discourse*.

For further information the reader is referred to the bibliography.

The Uniqueness of the Present Edition

Now the present edition of the *Regulæ* is unique, not only because it is the only bilingual Latin-English edition as well as the only independent and self-sufficient English edition of Descartes' *Rules* available, but also because it offers substantial contextualization of the text by means of a comprehensive index, an accompanying glossary, and an extensive bibliography. Therefore, as far as precedents are concerned, this edition seeks to provide a Latin-English counterpart both to the Latin-German edition of Springmeyer, Gäbe, and Zekl and to the Latin-French edition of Le Roy.

As has been indicated, the present edition does not seek to repeat all the work of 'AT', 'C', and 'SGZ' by reproducing, in the apparatus criticus to the Latin text, all the manuscript variants of 'H', 'L', 'N', and 'A'. For all the previous editions still contain even obvious printing errors, and for this reason alone not all the manuscript variants are significant, philosophically or otherwise.

As far as the footnotes to the English translation are concerned, it suffices to remark that, while it would have been possible, of course, to comment in detail on virtually each and every sentence of the *Rules*, still, the main aim here has been much more modest, namely, to provide, in the form of references, leads, and clues, a representative sampling of those texts which constitute the context of the text. Necessarily, then, the more one knows about the text, the less satisfied one will be with the context.

In the present edition the square brackets ('[...]') in the margin of the Latin text contain numbers giving the pagination of the edition of Adam and Tannery. The numbers at the beginning of each paragraph in the English text indicate the division into paragraphs of the Latin text, to which they have also been added for convenient reference. Nor are the headings of the individual rules as given in the table of contents and in the text from the author, but rather have they been provided by the editor based on

[258] See Toulmin, *Cosmopolis*, p. 14.

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